



THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE CLASSICAL MUSIC INDUSTRY ARE HONOURED AT THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRA AWARDS

- The ABO has presented its 2021 ABO Award to ‘the musicians’ – the unsung heroes of the sector who are facing unprecedented hardship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Nominated by their peers throughout the industry, Wigmore Hall’s John Gilhooly OBE, HarrisonParrott France’s Moema Parrott, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment’s Crispin Woodhead and London Philharmonic Orchestra’s Greg Felton, are celebrated for the leadership, resilience and invention they have shown over the past year
- Recently retired orchestra chief executives and former ABO Chairs, John Summers and Timothy Walker CBE AM, are also honoured for their contribution to the sector
- Presented by Classic FM presenter Margherita Taylor and ABO Chair Simon Webb, the awards event marked the end of the 2021 ABO Conference which took place online this week (10-12 March)

As the **Association of British Orchestra Conference** comes to a close today (12 March), the industry body has announced the recipient of its annual **ABO Award** and the winners of the **2021 ABO/Classical Music Awards**, celebrating the achievements of colleagues across the sector during what has been an incredibly challenging year. The online awards event, presented with ABO Online Media Partner **Classical Music** and ABO Principal Media Partner **Classic FM**, was hosted by ABO Chair and BBC Philharmonic Director **Simon Webb** and Classic FM presenter **Margherita Taylor**.

The ABO dedicated its prestigious **ABO Award** to all the musicians who help to make the UK’s orchestral sector the global success that it is and whose livelihoods are currently at stake as a result of the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Simon Webb, ABO Chair who presented the ABO Award, commented: *The ABO Award is presented annually to the individual or institution considered by the membership to have made the most important contribution to the orchestral life of the UK. But in this exceptional year the ABO board decided that it was not one individual that needed celebrating, but a collective. While it has been a tough year for those of us who manage orchestras, it has been even tougher for those who make the music. Forced to down tools, go on furlough, rely on the Self Employed Income Support Scheme, or cope with no income at all, they have had to show reserves of resilience and ingenuity to survive.*

They have had to accept cancellations with good grace, and show flexibility when we have spotted a last minute opportunity to put concerts on. And what has been impressive is that so many have kept the music alive, from playing on their doorsteps to creating online resources for children. So it is with pride that we have decided to present the 2021 ABO Award to 'the musicians'.

Winners of the annual **ABO/Classical Music Awards**, now in their tenth year, were also announced, offering an opportunity for the industry to come together to recognise the heroic efforts made by their colleagues in the fields of artist, concert hall and orchestra management, working tirelessly behind the scenes, and going above and beyond to bring music to audiences and into communities whilst the industry continues to navigate the unprecedented and critical impact of the pandemic. After receiving more nominations than ever before, the four recipients were announced by Classic FM presenter **Margherita Taylor** during the online event.

Winner of the **Classical Music Artist Manager of the Year** category is President of HarrisonParrott France and CEO of Polyarts, **Moema Parrott**, who was praised for the innovation and creativity she has shown in spearheading a range of digital initiatives and 360 management approach as part of Polyarts and HarrisonParrott as well as supporting Lorna Aizlewood in the founding of *Virtual Circle*, a major new digital platform aimed at embracing live-streamed concerts, workshop and master-classes, interviews, digital festivals and more.

Classical Music Concert Hall Manager of the Year went to Artistic and Executive Director of Wigmore Hall, **John Gilhooly OBE**, for his extraordinary achievement in curating Wigmore Hall's high-quality series of free online performances – the first to take place in any UK hall following the start of the first lockdown – which were broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and which continue to bring the joy of live music to audiences throughout the world.

The recipient of the **Orchestra Manager of the Year** award was Chief Executive of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, **Crispin Woodhead**, for the leadership he has shown in the creation of the OAE's new digital platform, the OAE Player, and the launch of the OAE's initiative with Acland Burghley School in the London Borough of Camden which has seen the orchestra become the first in Britain to take up a full, active residence in a secondary school.

So vast and impressive were the nominations that, for the first time, the decision was made by the panel to present a **Commendation** to **Greg Felton**, Digital Creative at the London Philharmonic Orchestra, for his work expanding the London Philharmonic Orchestra's online presence over the past year including single-handedly managing the filming and streaming of the LPO's series of online concerts.

In addition, **ABO Special Awards** were presented to two recently retired orchestra Chief Executives who have also both served as ABO Chair throughout their careers. In recognition of the leadership they brought to the orchestras they served as well in honour of their commitment to the wider orchestral sector, the awards were presented to former Chief Executive of The Hallé, **John Summers**, and former Chief Executive & Artistic Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, **Timothy Walker CBE AM**.

Over the past three days the 2021 ABO Conference has brought delegates from all areas of the classical music industry together to take an in-depth look at the challenges the orchestral sector has faced in this most unprecedented of years. Centred on the theme of 'Aftershock', sessions and keynote speeches have analysed the seismic issues that have sent shockwaves through the sector – from the devastating impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the threatening repercussions of Brexit, to the urgency of the climate change crisis and the reignited call to confront classical music's

inequities and action meaningful change in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement. For further details on the conference and the work that the ABO does, visit www.abo.org.uk.

ABO CONFERENCE AWARDS – WINNERS

ABO AWARD:

The Musicians

ABO/CLASSICAL MUSIC AWARDS:

Classical Music Artist Manager of the Year

Moema Parrott, President, HarrisonParrott France and CEO, Polyarts

Classical Music Concert Hall Manager of the Year

John Gilhooly OBE, Artistic and Executive Director, Wigmore Hall

Orchestra Manager of the Year

Crispin Woodhead, Chief Executive, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Commendation

Greg Felton, Digital Creative, London Philharmonic Orchestra

ABO SPECIAL AWARD:

Former Chief Executive, The Hallé, **John Summers**

Former Chief Executive & Artistic Director, London Philharmonic Orchestra, **Timothy Walker CBE AM**

Winner biographies:

Classical Music Artist Manager of the Year:

Moema Parrott, President, HarrisonParrott France and CEO, Polyarts

Moema Parrott is Founder & CEO of Polyarts, President of HP France and Director (New Business) on the HP Board. She has 19 years' experience in broad roles linked to talent development, marketing & acquisitions: in music, television, film, digital distribution. Combining positions at large global companies with smaller entrepreneurial endeavours she has experience in management of artists, business development, start-ups, governance, marketing, PR, digital media, strategy, partnerships, consultancies, branding, budgeting, operations, P&L accountability. She also speaks five languages.

Classical Music Concert Hall Manager of the Year:

John Gilhooly OBE, Artistic and Executive Director, Wigmore Hall

John Gilhooly became Director of Wigmore Hall in 2005, making him, then, the youngest leader of any of the world's great concert halls. As Director of Wigmore Hall, he programmes the largest chamber music and song series in the world. John has been honoured by heads of state and academic institutions. In 2013 he was awarded an OBE and in 2015 was made a Knight of the Order of the White Rose of Finland by the President of Finland. John has also received the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art and the Order of the Star of Italy. In 2016 he was awarded the German Order of Merit, Germany's highest civilian honour. He is a recipient of Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Music (2006), Honorary Membership of the Royal College of Music (2012),

Honorary Fellowship of the Guildhall School (2015), and Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Irish Academy of Music (2016) and is patron of Leeds Lieder, Irish Heritage, Cavatina Chamber Music Trust, Wimbledon Music Festival and Corpus Christi Maiden Lane Refurbishment Project. John was awarded the Heidelberger Frühling Music Award in 2019 he was also presented with the Musicians' Company Cobbett Medal for chamber music. He is Chairman of the Royal Philharmonic Society, one of the oldest music societies in the world and is the current Chairman of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World.

Orchestra Manager of the Year:

Crispin Woodhead, Chief Executive, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Born in 1971, Crispin Woodhead attended Manchester Grammar School and later studied modern languages (French and German) as organ scholar at Pembroke College, Oxford. He then joined the Royal Northern College of Music as postgraduate pianist, subsequently becoming junior fellow in keyboard studies and lecturer.

In 1998 he co-founded MusicTeachers.co.uk, the largest independent UK internet service for music teachers and in 1999 he founded Phoenix Arts Management, representing opera singers and conductors. In 2002 he taught at Rugby School where he was appointed Head of Modern Languages. In 2010 he co-founded the award-winning period orchestra, Arcangelo with cellist Jonathan Cohen, before joining the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in 2015. He is an experienced crematorium organist and undertaker.

Orchestra Manager of the Year Commendation:

Greg Felton, Digital Creative, London Philharmonic Orchestra

As Digital Creative at London Philharmonic Orchestra, Greg makes the video content for the Orchestra's social media channels, including behind the scenes adventures, insights into repertoire with the musicians, and its hugely popular animated timpani series.

ABO Special Awards:

John Summers

John Summers studied at Trinity College of Music before becoming a freelance cellist. He was employed by the Royal Northern Sinfonia as a player and manager, and was appointed Chief Executive in 1992, going on to play a central role in concept development and planning for the building now known as Sage Gateshead. He joined the Hallé as Chief Executive in September 1999, an organization that at the time needed to go through a major process of change, and which had only very recently emerged from a financial and management crisis. In close partnership with the Hallé's Music Director Sir Mark Elder, he built and developed a vision for the orchestra that combined excellence on the concert platform with extending its reach into music education and the community, along with the creation of a family of Hallé ensembles, including the Hallé Youth Choir and Youth Orchestra, Youth Training Choir, and Children's Choir. He led the project to acquire and transform St. Peter's with funding raised entirely from non-public sources, which in tandem with a broader redevelopment of the area, has transformed this industrial suburb into one of the most impressive areas of Greater Manchester, and provided the Hallé with a rehearsal and recording venue to rival any equivalent in the country. He was a member of the ABO Board between 1991 and 1998, serving three years as chairman, and rejoined the ABO board from 2014 to 2019.

Timothy Walker CBE AM

Timothy Walker became Chief Executive & Artistic Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 2002. Key achievements included leading the LPO to greater prominence throughout the UK and the world with the development of Royal Festival Hall, Eastbourne, Brighton and Saffron Hall residencies, other UK performances including Leicester, Scotland (Edinburgh International Festival), Manchester, Aldeburgh, the ongoing Glyndebourne residency, and international touring with

increased global brand recognition. He also shaped the LPO artistically with creative and engaging programming such as The Rest is Noise, Belief and Beyond Belief, and Isle of Noises as well as being at the forefront of new commissions and the promotion of 21st century music, alongside appointing Vladimir Jurowski to Principal Conductor and Yannick Nezet Seguin as Principal guest conductor. He was committed to broadening diversity and inclusion with specific initiatives such as the Junior Artists Programme for those from under-represented backgrounds as well as other very successful collaborations such as with Ravi Shankar. He has increased the LPO's investment in Education and Community work and also focused on developing and nurturing the talent of the future from Music Masters for primary school age up through to individuals building their international careers. He was awarded a CBE for service to the Arts and Music in the 2020 New Year Honours. He served on the ABO board from 2004 to 2010 including three years as its Chair, and as a trustee of the ABO Trust.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the ABO Conference

The ABO's primary event each year is its annual conference. It is a major gathering of the classical music industry in the UK, with over 350 delegates drawn from orchestras both from within the UK and abroad, plus funding agencies, venues, agents, publishers and suppliers. Delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's ABO Conference moved for the first time online for an in-depth look at the challenges the orchestral sector has faced in this most unprecedented of years. The ABO's Principal Media Partner is Classic FM, with Classical Music as Online Media Partner, Help Musicians as Charity Partner and the British Council as International Partner.

About the Association of British Orchestras (ABO)

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. The ABO's mission is to enable and support an innovative, collaborative and sustainable orchestral sector by providing advice, support, intelligence and information to the people who make British orchestras a global success. Recent initiatives include Resonate in association with PRS Foundation and BBC Radio 3, which supports the best orchestral music of the last 25 years, and Find Your Way which identifies and offers training to future sector leaders. The ABO campaigned successfully for Orchestra Tax Relief and continues to campaign for the sector at the highest levels, to help build resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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